

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-07 EUR-08 IO-06 PM-03

SP-02 INR-05 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 ACDA-10 /065 W

-----113996 200536Z /14

P R 191502Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0666

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T NAIROBI 10682

LIMDIS

LONDON FOR MOOSE

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SO, US

SUBJECT: GROWING KENYAN CONCERN RE SOMALIA THREAT

REFS: (A) NAIROBI 10138 (B) STATE 195954

SUMMARY: SENIOR KENYAN FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN BRIEFED PER REFTEL THAT USG HAS, DUE TO FIGHTING IN OGADEN, CHOSEN TO HOLD IN ABEYANCE DECISION IN PRINCIPLE TO SELL DEFENSIVE

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ARMS TO SOMALIS. KENYAN OFFICIALS WELCOMED THIS DECISION, BUT INDICATED THAT SOMALI MILITARY SUCCESSES AGAINST ETHIOPIA HAD FURTHER HEIGHTENED THEIR FEARS OF EARLY SOMALI ATTACK ON KENYA. END SUMMARY.

1. DECM SEPARATELY BRIEFED FOREIGN MINISTRY PERMSEC NG'ANG'A AND DEFENSE MINISTRY PERMSEC KIEREINI ON CONTENTS REFTEL (B).

BOTH OFFICIALS CHARACTERIZED OUR DECISION TO HOLD IN ABEYANCE ANY ARMS DELIVERIES TO SOMALIA AS "TIMELY AND HELPFUL" TO KENYA. NG'ANG'A SAID THAT SOMALI MILITARY SUCCESSES IN ETHIOPIA'S OGADEN HAD ALTERED EARLIER KENYAN VIEW THAT WESTERN ARMS OFFERS TO SOMALIA WOULD ENHANCE KENYAN SECURITY BY DECREASING SOVIET INFLUENCE. HE NOTED THAT SOVIETS HAVE CONTINUED TO SUPPLY ARMS TO SOMALIA DESPITE SOMALIA'S SUCCESSFUL APPROACHES TO OTHER COUNTRIES FOR ARMS AID. NG'ANG'A ALSO STATED THAT KENYAN GOVERNMENT HAS REQUESTED BRITAIN NOT TO PROVIDE ANY ARMS TO SOMALIA UNTIL COMPARABLE ARMS HAD BEEN PROVIDED TO KENYA. HE REMARKED THAT SOMALIA "DUPLICITY" SHOULD BE "LESSON TO US ALL".

2. DEFENSE MINISTRY PERMSEC KIEREINI SAID RECENT INTERCEPTS OF SOMALI MILITARY RADIO MESSAGES INDICATED THAT SOMALIS, APPARENTLY ENCOURAGED BY THEIR SPECTACULAR MILITARY SUCCESSES IN ETHIOPIA. MAY BE ADVANCING TIME TABLE FOR ATTACK ON NORTHEASTERN KENYA. ONE SUCH INTERECEPT INDICATED THAT 500 KENYAN SOMALI "SHIFTAS" (IRREGULARS) ARE BEING SUMMONED BACK TO SOMALIA FOR TRAINING. ANOTHER INTERCEPT REPORTED (ACCURATELY) THAT KENYA HAS REINFORCED ITS TROOPS AT KEY NORTHEASTERN TOWN OF WAZIR UP TO BATTALION STRENGTH. WHILE KIEREINI FEELS THAT SOMALIA WOULD BE INCAPABLE OF LAUNCHING FULL SCALE MILITARY ATTACK ON KENYA UNTIL SOME TIME NEXT YEAR, KENYANS ARE ANTICIPATING EARLY INCREASE IN INSURGENT ACTIVITY BY SOMALI "SHITAS."

3. ASIDE FROM MEASURES INTENDED TO IMPROVE KENYAN MILITARY
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READINESS TO RESIST SOMALI MILITARY PRESSURE, KIEREINI SAID THAT SPECIAL DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS ARE NOW BEING MADE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH UGANDA. WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT AMIN CAANOT BE TRUSTED, HE SAID THAT KENYA MUST DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO AVOID BEING CAUGHT IN TWO FRONT WAR.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONAL SECURITY THREATS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 19-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NAIROB10682
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770301-0349
Format: TEL
From: NAIROBI
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770844/aaaabkve.tel
Line Count: 100
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f2160358-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 77 NAIROBI 10138, 77 STATE 195954
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1549496
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GROWING KENYAN CONCERN RE SOMALIA THREAT
TAGS: MASS, SO, US, ET, KE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f2160358-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009